

Appendix 1

Brent Virtual School: Case Studies 2014/15

Case Study 1: It's never too late to intervene.

C achieved Level 5 in En, ma and sci at KS2 but at the start of Year 11 was being predicted G and U grades at GCSE. He was in a good school but his care placement had broken down. He was moved and faced a long complicated journey on public transport to get to school. His attendance and punctuality immediately dropped along with any motivation to achieve his obvious potential. The BVS advisor met with C's social worker and focusing only on his need and not what was the easiest response arranged and paid for (from retained PPG) for a daily taxi to take C to school. For the first few days C refused to get up on time and take the taxi. We persisted in sending the taxi and after about a week C decided to take advantage of it. We talked to his school and they agreed to push him more and ensure he was taking full advantage of all the additional support on offer. In the meantime the BVS planned an Easter and Summer Half Term Catch-Up School with experienced tutors who were tailoring programmes to match individual pupils. C attended both Catch-Up Schools and gave some very positive feedback. C was more ready to face the challenge of sitting his GCSEs and achieved C grades in maths and science. Unfortunately he did not achieve 5A*-C grades but has gone on to college with a more positive attitude to learning.

Case Study 2: Challenging the School System.

R is a 7 year old LAC who when he came into care in December 2014 had never been in a formal school setting. He had attended Nursery until July 2011 and was then 'home schooled' by his mother for 3 years. He had made minimal progress in learning and in developing speech and socialisation skills. He knew only a few letters of the alphabet and could not write his name. Early admission to school was crucial and he started in Year 3 in February 2015. A PEP meeting was held two weeks later. The challenge was to devise an appropriate programme that would accelerate his progress. The school was initially resistant to 'treating R differently' and placed him on a part-time timetable and allocated a TA to work with him. His timetable was split – mornings in Reception class learning Phonics and foundation skills, afternoons in Year 3 doing Art. School provided one hour Play Therapy weekly. BVS challenged the lack of teacher input and, using R's PPG, provided two hours per week home tuition in literacy and numeracy. Social Care referred him to the Speech and Language Service. The LAC EP did an initial observation followed by an assessment six weeks later. The first term was traumatic for R. However, he gradually settled and began to progress. A PEP Review, held in July 2015, was positive. His school reports that he is making progress academically and his speech and social skills are improving. He is happy and loves learning. In the autumn term he will attend school full-time, with a split timetable – mornings in Year 1, afternoons with his peer group. Additional support is on-going. All believe that progression to age-related levels of achievement is going to be a long-term process but is attainable. The support and challenge provided to R's school by both social care and the BVS has been critical in the progress made.

Case Study 3: From risk of exclusion to a positive fresh start.

A was struggling in an outstanding school and an incident in Dec 2014 led to a period of fixed term exclusion. This period coincided with his foster placement breakdown. His school was reluctant to take A back until some therapeutic work had been undertaken. BVS and Brent Inclusion Support Team arranged alternative provision as 'respite' and supported the transition by attending the initial induction meeting with carer. Clear targets and timescales for review were discussed as the aim was for A to be reintegrated back into mainstream as soon as possible. BVS also arranged for the Educational Psychologist for LAC to assess A in his respite provision. In the meantime A was also placed with new carer which offered some much needed stability. A PEP review meeting in March at his school, professionals agreed that due to the travelling distance, A should move to a school nearer to his new placement and have a 'fresh start'. BVS worked with A's carer and social worker in identifying 'good' local schools and supported in the school application process. A started at a 'good' school in June 2015 and the new school has recently reported that A continues to make good progress.